

**On The Inside:**

- Survey Shows Strength of NIMBY.
- Sherman Comprehensive Plan Nears Completion.
- Rise In Renters Outpacing Home Ownership.
- Municipal Code Design Review: PA 95-0475.
- Springfield Historic Sites Design Guidelines.

# TrendLines

*Effective Planning, Affecting Lives.*

## THE LEAD: Planning Commission To Begin Work on Regional Comprehensive Plan

While communities in Sangamon County know the relationship between cooperative, comprehensive and continuing planning and long-term success, many communities in the region have not had access to the resources necessary for active long-range planning. The SSCRPC hopes to address this by working with communities in the region to develop a regional comprehensive plan. An organizational meeting with leaders from the various municipalities in the region is currently scheduled for December.

This will be the first-time that a comprehensive plan is developed for the region, and the work is largely made possible through resources provided by the Illinois Comprehensive Regional Plan-

ning Fund (PA 095-0677). The General Assembly made these funds available to Metropolitan Planning Organizations — such as SSCRPC — last year, and the Sangamon regional plan is just one of the major planning needs that the Planning Commission intends to address with them.

While the final form of the initiative will be determined by the municipal officials in the region, Commission staff anticipate that the work will focus on six areas of study: environment and natural resources; economic and technology development; transportation and public infrastructure; housing and neighborhoods; heritage, recreational and cultural amenities; and land use and development.

The project is expected to be



overseen by a Policy Committee made up of municipal officials, who will work with a Technical Advisory Group representing subject area specialists. The regional plan that the effort develops will include an assessment of the current status of the region and trends affecting it, along with priorities for the region and suggested strategies for addressing the priorities.

Commission staff anticipate that it will take 18 to 24 months to complete the project. For more information, contact Jeff Fulgenzi at the Commission.

## THE SECOND STORY: Saying Goodbye to Friends and Colleagues!

Starting this December the Planning Commission will begin to say goodbye to friends and colleagues who have been instrumental in the success of the Commission's work over many, many years. Due to Sangamon County's voluntary severance program, four staff members have opted to retire to pursue other opportunities. This will represent the loss of decades of experience on the staff as well

as four people who have always been committed to improving the lives of the public we serve. These staff members are:

- Susan Poludniak, SSCRPC Assistant Director.
- Randy Armstrong, Director of the Sangamon Co. Dept. of Zoning and Building Safety.

- Mark Jones, Principal Planner for Mapping & Data.
- Shirley Blankenship, Clerk.

An open house to thank these four individuals for all of their work will be held in the Commission's conference room immediately following the Commission's Dec. 17 meeting.



*As we go into what has been called a national "economic meltdown", 78% of Americans believe that there should be no new development in their hometowns, and 17% even oppose the development of single family residences.*

## RESEARCH REPORT: Survey Shows Strength of NIMBY

Those involved in planning and development are acutely aware of what is called the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) movement. The implications of NIMBY are evidenced by trends reported by the Saint Consulting Group which conducts an annual survey regarding the kinds of development American's support and oppose. The 2007 "Saint Index" finds that:

- 78% of Americans believe there should be no new development in their hometown, up 5%;
- 25% of all Americans have opposed a development project, twice as many as have supported one;
- When asked what types of new development they would like to see, one-third said "none", which was the most popular choice;
- The number of Americans who support power plant development rose sharply, but 57% still oppose their construction;
- Casinos are now tied with landfills as the most op-

posed type of development project, 32% oppose hospitals, and 17% even oppose single-family home development;

- NIMBYism is not associated with political party lines, but 89% believe a candidates position on growth is important at election time;
- The explanations given by those surveyed are not always their real reasons.

For more information on the Saint Consulting Group survey, go to their website: [www.tscg.biz](http://www.tscg.biz).

## Sherman Comprehensive Plan Nears Completion

At the request of the Village of Sherman, the Commission entered into an agreement in 2007 to update the village's Comprehensive Plan. This project, coordinated by SSCRPC staffer Joe Zeibert, is a good example of how the Commission approaches such projects and the importance of public input.

In order to obtain initial public input, the village worked with the Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs "Mapping the Future of Your Community" program. This program involved input from citizens, community officials, farmers and other service organizations to create a vision for the community.

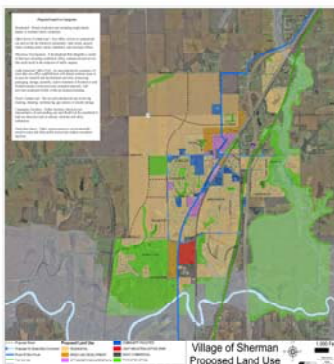
Once the mapping program was completed, the Commission developed a survey that was distributed to each household within the village. The survey had an excellent response rate of slightly more than 50%. Sherman's officials and Commission staff utilized the opinions of the residents throughout the planning process.

The creation of the plan included the development of a detailed land use inventory, and data collection was conducted for all of the plan's components. The plan addresses demographic, environmental, transportation, utility and economic development issues, along with land use considera-

tions. Each section includes goals and objectives that the village should follow in order to achieve the vision its residents have for it. The proposed land use plan serves as a guide village leaders can apply when making land use decisions.

On November 17<sup>th</sup> 2008, the Commission held an open house in Sherman to showcase the plan and obtain additional comments from the public before the plan would proceed to the Village Board for adoption.

Other communities interested in the comprehensive planning process or how the Commission might be of service to them should contact us at 535-3110.



## TREND WATCH: Rise in Renters Outpacing Home Ownership

A recent Census study reported by the *New York Times* indicates that a surge in foreclosures and the unsettled national housing market is leading to more American's renting. The percentage of households headed by homeowners, which reached a record 69.1% in 2005, has fallen to 67.8%. This is the sharpest decline in 20 years. Households

headed by renters, conversely, increased from 30.9% to 32.2%.

While these may look like modest changes, analysts say that they suggest a significant shift in national housing trends, offsetting the gains in homeownership achieved by what President Bush called the "ownership society."

William Apgar of Harvard's Joint

Center for Housing Studies said that we are "seeing more dramatic growth in renters and a decline in the number of owners." Apgar believes that people are seeing homeownership as a more risky venture than in the past.

For more information, see the article by Rachell Swarns in the June 21, 2008, issue of the *Times*.



*We are "seeing more dramatic growth in renters and a decline in the number of owners."*

## LEGAL WATCH: Municipal Code Design Review

The Winter 2008 issue of *The Commissioner*, produced by the Illinois Association of Historic Preservation Commissions, draws attention to a new piece of State law.

Public Act 95-0475 amends the Illinois Municipal Code allowing municipalities to establish local standards solely for the review of the exterior design of buildings and structures, excluding utility facilities and outdoor off-premises advertising signs. It also allows for the municipality to designate a board or commission to implement the review process.

The passage of this new municipal design review legislation is expected to formally address limitations of regulations under traditional zoning by allowing communities to adopt architectural regulations with the sole goal of improving community appearance. *The Commissioner* notes that although the Municipal Code already provided guidance for what can be regulated — such as use, height, bulk, set-backs, and open space ratios — it does not limit or impose specific regulations regarding standards for areas of review. The new legislation leaves the criteria for making determinations

concerning appearance up to the community.

According to the Municipal Design Review Network's Jan. 2008 *Legal Update*, "Municipalities have been adopting ordinances regulating the exterior designs of structures nearly as long as they have been regulating zoning within their borders."

For example, *The Commissioner* draws attention to the Village of Glencoe, IL, zoning code which prohibits structures that are too similar, dissimilar, and/or "inappropriate" in design for the area.

## NEIGHBORHOODS: Historic Sites Design Guidelines

With the assistance of the SSCRPC staff, the City of Springfield's Historic Sites Commission (SHSC) recently approved an updated version of its design guidelines for building restoration and reconstruction in historic areas of Springfield.

The SHSC notes that the design

guidelines "are intended to provide criteria and standards that the Historic Sites Commission considers important in determining the appropriateness of proposed building renovations in Springfield's historic downtown", but they are also useful for anyone considering improvements for an

historic property.

The guidelines will be posted on the SHSC website ([www.springfield.il.us/Commissions/HistSites/Default.asp](http://www.springfield.il.us/Commissions/HistSites/Default.asp)) and should also be available through the City's Office of Planning and Economic Development. (217-789-2377).





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### Upcoming Events:

- **Nov. 26-27, the Commission's offices will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday.**
- **Dec. 11, Regional Comprehensive Plan organizational meeting for local officials.**
- **Dec. 25, the Commission's offices will be closed for Christmas.**
- **The Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission will meet in Room 212 of the County Building at 4:00PM on the first Wednesday of every month unless otherwise posted.**
- **The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission meets in the Sangamon County Board Chamber at 9:30 AM on the third Wednesday of each month unless otherwise posted.**
- **The Springfield Area Transportation Study Technical Committee meets in Room 212 of the County Building at 9:30 AM on the first Thursday of each month, with the Policy Committee meeting at noon on the following Thursday, unless otherwise posted.**

### About the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission



The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) serves as the joint planning body for the City of Springfield and Sangamon County. The Planning Commission also works with other public and semi-public agencies throughout the area to promote orderly growth and redevelopment.

The Commission has 17 members including representatives from the Sangamon County Board, Springfield City Council, special units of government, and 6 appointed citizens from the city and county. The Executive Direc-

tor is appointed by the Executive Board of the Commission.

Through the work of its professional staff, the Commission provides overall planning services related to land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economics, environment, and special projects.

The agency prepares area-wide planning documents and assists the county, cities, and villages, as well as special districts, with planning activities. The staff reviews all proposed subdivisions and makes recommendations on all county zoning and variance requests. The agency serves

as the Floodplain Administrator, Census coordinator, and local A-95 review clearinghouse to process and review all federally funded applications for the county. The agency also maintains existing base maps, census tract maps, township and zoning maps and the road name map for the county.

The Planning Commission's Executive Director is also the Plats Officer for Sangamon County. Divisions of land must be reviewed by the Plats Officer to insure compliance with the State Plat Act and local zoning and subdivision regulations.